

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 151023Z APR 76
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9852

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 11055

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR FR

SUBJECT: COMMUNISTS IN NATO GOVERNMENTS: USG STATEMENTS

1. YOUR STATEMENTS TO THE AMERICAN NEWSPAPER EDITORS ASSOCIATION OF APRIL 13, AND TO THE EUROPEAN CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE IN LONDON LAST DECEMBER, HAVE RECEIVED EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY HERE THIS WEEK. THIS HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY TRUE OF THOSE PORTIONS OF YOUR REMARKS DEALING WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF POSSIBLE COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN NATO GOVERNMENTS.

2. AS YOU WILL RECALL, USG WARNINGS ABOUT THE DANGERS TO WESTERN SECURITY OF COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN NATO GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN FRONT PAGE NEWS HERE SINCE MID-FEBRUARY, WHEN GENERAL HAIG WAS EXTENSIVELY MISQUOTED BY FRENCH MEDIA. AT THAT TIME PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC TOLD ME THAT HE CONSIDERED IT A HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT TO PUBLICIZE THE ISSUE. HE WAS RIGHT IN THE SENSE THAT A NUMBER OF RESPONSIBLE FRENCH JOURNALISTS AND INTELLECTUALS HAVE SINCE COME FORWARD TO CALL FOR A DEBATE ON THE MERITS OF THE PROBLEM AS OPPOSED TO EMPHASIS ON THE RED HERRING OF U.S. INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

3. IN RECENT DAYS EMBASSY OFFICERS AND I HAVE BEGUN TO
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RECEIVE NEGATIVE REACTIONS FROM PRO-AMERICAN AND PRO-

GISCARD CONTACTS WHO SHARE OUR BASIC OBJECTIVE OF KEEP-
ING COMMUNISTS FROM ANY ROLE IN GOVERNMENT. THE MESSAGE
WE ARE RECEIVING IS THAT THE USG HAS MADE ITS POINT IN
AN UNAMBIGUOUS WAY. TO CONTINUE TO TALK ABOUT IT AT
THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IN A SORT
OF DRUMBEAT FASHION WILL SOON REACH A POINT OF
DIMINISHING RETURNS. THE IDEA THAT THE USG WANTS TO
DICTATE EUROPEAN INTERNAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS WILL
BECOME STRONGER THAN THE IDEA OF THE COMMUNIST DANGER TO
WESTERN SECURITY. THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE USG TO
ASSUME A LOW PROFILE AND LET THE EUROPEANS THEMSELVES
CARRY THE BALL.

4. IN THIS CONTEXT, I WANT TO CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO A
GISCARD INTERVIEW WITH PARADE MAGAZINE WHICH WILL BE PUB-
LISHED ON SUNDAY, MAY 16, ON THE EVE OF HIS STATE VISIT
TO THE U.S. THE INTERVIEWER ASKED GISCARD TO COMMENT
ON HIGH-LEVEL USG STATEMENTS EXPRESSING CONCERNS ABOUT
POSSIBLE COMMUNIST PARTY PARTICIPATION IN SOME WESTERN
EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING FRANCE. GISCARD'S REPLY
IS QUOTED BELOW IN FULL:

"THE UNITED STATES CAN ALWAYS EXPRESS THEIR OWN
VIEWS ON ANY PROBLEM, BUT WE WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY
INTERFERENCE IN OUR DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. FOR THE
SAME REASON I WILL NOT EXPRESS AT THE MOMENT ANY
JUDGMENT OF AMERICAN CANDIDATES TO THE AMERICAN

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 11055

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PRESIDENCY. IT IS UP TO US TO HANDLE IT, AND WE
WILL."

OUR INTERPRETATION OF GISCARD'S RESPONSE IS THAT HE FEELS
WE HAVE RENDERED A USEFUL SERVICE BY BRINGING THE ISSUE
OUT IN THE OPEN, BUT IT IS NOW UP TO THE EUROPEANS TO
TAKE THE LEAD. I BELIEVE HE SIGNED HIS INTENTION TO DO
SO IN HIS TELEVISION ADDRESS OF MARCH 24 WHEN HE SAID
THAT FRANCE IS NOW FACED BY A CHOICE BETWEEN A COLLECTI-
VIST AND LIBERAL SOCIETY, WITH THE WORD "COLLECTIVIST"
CONNOTING ALL THAT IS EVIL ABOUT THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND
ITS IDEOLOGY.

5. I REALIZE THAT YOU ARE FACED WITH AN URGENT PROBLEM
IN ITALY THAT MAY REQUIRE EXTRAORDINARY STATEMENTS AND
MEASURES. AT THE SAME TIME, I WOULD HOPE WE COULD BEGIN
TO REDUCE OUR EXPOSURE ON THIS QUESTION IN FRANCE WHERE
THE SITUATION IS FAR FROM BEING IRRETRIEVABLE. INDEED,
THE LUMPING OF FRANCE TOGETHER WITH ITALY ON THE COMMUN-
IST ISSUE IS ONE OF THE UNFORTUNATE FALLOUTS OF THE
ENTIRE EXERCISE. IN FRANCE, THE COMMUNISTS ARE A
MINORITY ON THE LEFT, AND THE COALITION IN POWER IS
VIABLE AND RELATIVELY HEALTHY COMPARED TO THE ITALIAN
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. I BELIEVE IT IS TIME NOW TO STOP
TALKING ABOUT THE ISSUE IN PUBLIC AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS,
AND IF WE CAN'T STOP TALKING ABOUT IT, I WOULD HOPE WE
COULD FIND A WAY TO FOCUS MORE SHARPLY ON ITALY, AND
LEAVE FRANCE OUT OF IT FOR THE TIME BEING.

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